

Polishing the Hearts

تهذيب القلوب

{English- إنجليزية}

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Allaah - the Most High - said:

"O you who believe! Remember Allaah and remember Him a lot." [Soorah al-Ahzaab 33:41].

"Those men and women who remember Allaah a lot." [Soorah al-Ahzaab 33:35].

"So when you have finished the rights of your Pilgrimage, then remember Allaah as you remember your fore-father, or with more intense remembrance." [Soorah al-Baqarah 2:200].

These verses contain a command to remember Allaah intensely and abundantly, since the worshipper is in dire need of [remembering Allaah] and cannot do without it even for a twinkling of an eye. This is because every moment that a person does not spend in the dhikr (remembrance) of Allaah will not be of any benefit to him. Rather, the harm entailed in being neglectful of the dhikr of Allaah is far greater than any benefits that can be gained. One of the 'aarifeen (those who are knowledgeable about Allaah) said: "If a person were to spend such and such number of years engaged [in the dhikr of Allaah], then he turns away from it for just a moment, what he will lose is far greater than whatever he has already gained."

Al-Bayhaqee relates from 'Aishah radiiallaahu 'anhaa that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "There is no time in which the son of Aadam does not remember Allaah in it, except that it will be a source of regret for him on the Day of Judgement"²

Mu'aadh ibn jabal radiiallaahu 'anhu relates that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "The people of Paradise will not have any regrets except for those moments in which they were not engaged in the dhikr (remembrance) of Allaah."³

Mu'aadh ibn Jabal also relates that Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam was asked: What action is the most beloved to Allaah? So he replied: "That you continue to keep your tongue moist with the dhikr of Allaah, until you die."⁴

[POLISHING THE HEART]

Abu Dardaa radiiallaahu 'anhu said: "For everything there is a polish and the polish for the heart is the dhikr of Allaah".

Al-Bayhaqee relates from Ibn 'Umar radiiallaahu 'anhu that Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "For everything there is a polish, and the polish for the hearts is the dhikr (remembrance) of Allaah. There is nothing more potent in saving a person from the punishment of Allaah than the dhikr of Allaah." It was said: Not even Jihaad in the path of Allaah. So he replied: "Not even if you were to continue striking with your sword until it breaks."⁵

There is no doubt that hearts become rusty just as copper and silver coins become rusty. The polish for [this rust] is the dhikr of Allaah. This is because [dhikr] is like a polish [which polishes the heart] like a shiny mirror. When dhikr is left, the rust returns. But when dhikr resumes, then the heart is [again] polished. And hearts become rusty due to two things:-

(i) neglecting remembering Allaah, and

(ii) committing sins.

The polish for these two things is:-

(i) seeking Allaah's forgiveness and

(ii) dhikr.

[CONFUSING TRUTH WITH FALSEHOOD]

Whoever neglects [remembering Allaah] most of the time, then his heart will become rusty in accordance with how neglectful the person is. And when this [filthy] rust accumulates on the heart, then it no longer recognises things as they really are. Thus, it views falsehood as if it is the truth, and truth as if it is falsehood. This is because this rust darkens and confuses the heart's perception, and so it is unable to truly recognise things for what they really are. So as the rust accumulates, the heart gets blackened, and as this happens the heart becomes stained with this filthy rust, and when this occurs it corrupts the heart's perception and recognition of things. The heart [then] does not accept the truth nor does it reject falsehood, and this is the greatest calamity that can strike the heart. Being neglectful [of dhikr] and following of whims and desires is a direct consequence of such a heart, which [further] extinguish the heart's light and blinds its vision. Allaah - the Most High - said:

"And do not obey him whose heart We have made to be neglectful of Our remembrance, one who follows his own whims and desires and whose affairs are furat [have gone beyond bounds and whose deeds have been lost]." [Soorah al-Kahf 18:28].

[QUALITIES OF A GUIDE]

So when a worshipper desires to follow another person, then let him see: Is this person from the people of dhikr, or from the people who are negligent [about remembering Allaah]? Does this person judge in accordance with his whims and desires, or by the Revelation? So, if he judges by whims and desires then he is actually from those people who are negligent; those whose affairs have gone beyond bounds and whose deeds are lost.

The term furat [which occurs in the above verse] has been explained in many ways. It has been explained to mean:- (i) losing the rewards of that type of action which is essential to do, and in which lies success and happiness; (ii) exceeding the limits of something; (iii) being destroyed; and (iv) opposing the truth. Each of these sayings are very close in meaning to each other.

The point is that Allaah - the One free from all imperfections, the Most High - has prohibited following all those who possess such attributes. So it is absolutely essential that a person considers whether such attributes are found in his shaykh, or the person who's example he follows, or the person that he obeys. If they are, then he should distance himself from such a person. However, if it is found that the person is, in most cases, pre-occupied with the dhikr of Allaah and with following the Sunnah, and his affairs do not exceed the limits, but rather he is judicious and resolute in his affairs, then he should cling to him very firmly.

Indeed, there is no difference between the living and the dead, except with the dhikr of Allaah; since [the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam] said: "The example of one who remembers Allaah and someone who does not, is like the example between the living and the dead."⁶

FOOTNOTES:

1. AI-Waabilus-Sayyib min Kalimit-Tayyib (pp.78-82).

2. Hasan: Related by Abu Nu'aym in al-Hiliyatul-Awliyaa (51361-362). It was authenticated by Shaykh al-Albaanee in Saheehul-Jaami' (no.5720).

3. Saheeh: Related by Ibnus-Sunnee in 'Aml al-Yawma wal-Laylah (no.3). Refer to Saheehul-Jaami' (no.5446).
4. Hasan: Related by Ibn Hibbaan (no.2318). It was authenticated by Shaykh Saleem al-Hilaalee in Saheeh al-Waabilus-Sayyib (p.80).
5. Saheeh: Related by Ahmad (4/352), from Mu'aadh ibn Jabal radiiallaahu 'anhu. It was authenticated by al-Albaanee in Saheehul-Jaami' (no.5644).
6. Related by al-Bukhaaree (11/208) and Muslim (1/539).